THE NEGRO COLLEGE QUARTERLY

Vol. I December, 1943 No. 4

Negro History in Chicago Public Schools*

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IT IS EVIDENT THAT until education assumes the responsibility to educate American citizens to live together co-operatively and to appreciate racial diversity, we shall continue to live blindly and in confusion. Education is a social process. We live from birth to death in a world of persons and things, and it is the kind and quality of education gained that will shape the destiny of our democratic society. Since the school is a social agency it is the best place to improve inter-racial atttiudes and to teach American youth to believe in democracy and to practice it. Youth can be taught these basic fundamentals, and we can no longer ignore the fact that effective educational methods taught, year after year, can develop wholesome attitudes which will grow to a high degree of maturity.

Until recent years the school curriculum has scarcely dealt with Negro contributions. Now, in the Chicago Public Schools,

*_Editorial Note_: This article will be of special value to public school principals and to college teachers engaged in training prospective teachers. The eight units of study on Negro history prepared under the direction of the writer of this article can be purchased from the Board of of Education, Chicago Public Schools, for one dollar.

Negro youth is taught to respect himself and white youth is taught to appreciate Negro achievements.

When the Negro exposition met in Chicago in 1940, I was greatly interested and impressed by the contributions that had been made by Negroes in science, health, art, and literature to American life. I visited the Negro exposition several times, and I began to dream and hope for the time when Negro boys and girls would be given an opportunity to read about the achievements of our leaders. Over and above this, my principal, Miss Elinor C. McCollom, and I talked about the problems of Negroes. As a result of our many chats at every convenient time, Miss McCollom's interest prompted her to make it possible for me to present my plan to Dr. William H. Johnson, Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools.

I presented a plan of action to Dr. Johnson which he readily accepted. On the following day Miss McCollom and I met again with Dr. Johnson who appointed a committee with Miss McCollom as chairman. I was subsequently released from my teaching duties to go to work on this project with my chosen co-worker, Mrs. Bessie King. The committee consisted of Miss Elinor C. McCollom, principal of Emerson School; Mrs. Lois C. Morstrom, principal of Betsy Ross; Mrs. Ruth Jackson, principal of Colman School, with Mrs. King and I as research workers. We were assigned to the Bureau of Curriculum and given all the freedom that was necessary to carry on the research work.

The preparation of the units of material for use in various grades required reading the opinions of several authors in order to get a whole and unbiased point of view. In addition to this the units were written and rewritten for clarity and possible vocabulary difficulties. Much of the correspondence required several letters in order to follow up some incomplete information that was encountered. Oftentimes the research work was carried on until the late hours of an evening as well as on Saturday and Sunday. However, the work was enjoyable and we were happy

in the realization that Chicago youth would be given the privilege to read about the deeds of Negro Americans.

The research study was carried on mainly at the George Cleveland Hall Branch of the Chicago Public Library, which has the second largest collection of Negro books in the Middle West. Other material was sought at the University of Chicago Library, Field Museum, and Chicago Art Institute, and through extensive correspondence. The units of material were submitted for corrections, suggestions, and approval to Dr. Carter G. Woodson, editor of the *Journal of Negro History;* Dr. Melville Herskovits, anthropologist at Northwestern University; Dr. Avery O. Craven, professor of history of Southern United States at the University of Chicago; Dr. Fay Cooper Cole, anthropologist at the University of Chicago; Dr. Charles H. Wesley of Howard University, who is now president of Wilberforce University; and Dr. Walter Johnson, professor of English at the University of Illinois.

The material was also submitted for approval to Mrs. Maudelle Bousfield, our only colored high school principal in Chicago; Mrs. Ruth Jackson, our only colored elementary school principal; Miss Elinor C. McCollom, principal of Emerson School; and Mrs. Lois C. Morstrom, principal of Betsy Ross School. The approval of three outstanding colored teachers was sought in the persons of Miss Clara Anderson, history instructor at Du Sable High School; Mrs. Thelma Powell, history instructor at Wendell Phillips High School; and Mr. Samuel Stratton, history instructor at Du Sable High School.

The units of study are divided into three groups: primary grades 1, 2, and 3; intermediate grades 4, 5, and 6; and upper grades 7 and 8. After reading widely and consulting the courses of studies in social sciences the material was allocated to various grades. Community life is studied in the primary grades, and for these grades we chose to acquaint the children with Negroes in the various occupations. Stories were written for these grades

that will show the Negro not only as private and public servants, but as educators, musicians, and scientists.

The primary grade stories teach first graders that there are many kinds of helpers in the American culture. In one story called Billy's Ride, they learn that there are brown policemen. In another story entitled, Sally's Ride to the Farm, the children learn about the kind services rendered by the pullman porter. Other first grade stories tell about Marian Anderson's famous concert voice; Florence Price, who wrote a symphony; and Paul Lawrence Dunbar, who wrote poems about his people. Because most of Paul Lawrence Dunbar's poems are in dialect, the reason for the dialect is told in one of the stories which reads in part, "You will think that his father's way of talking is queer. He talks that way because he did not know the English language when he came to America. He spoke the best he could."

Second grade pupils learn about George Washington Carver, "who made over five hundred things from peanuts." Stories about Dorothy Maynor, a famous singer; R. Nathaniel Dett, a music composer; and Langston Hughes, a young poet, are presented in the second grade.

Third grade pupils learn about Chicago's colored neighbors, Mrs. Maudelle Bousfield, a colored high school principal; Arna Bontemps, an author; Dr. T. K. Lawless, a dermatologist. Life in West Africa's Dahomey is presented in 3A when far-away lands are studied.

Fourth grade pupils learn about Jan Matzeliger, inventor of the shoe-lasting machine; Granville T. Woods, inventor of electrical appliances; William Trial, a settler in the Indiana territory; and Paul Robeson, the rich-voiced baritone.

Fifth grade pupils read about Chicago's first settler, Jean Baptiste Point De Saible. In part the story reads, "De Saible lived and traded with the Indians in Chicago for seventeen years. In 1796, he sold the cabin to Le Mai, a Frenchman, who in turn sold

it to an Englishman, John Kinzie. De Saible then moved to Peoria, Illinois, where he spent his remaining years."

Sixth grade pupils learn that Negroes traveled with the early explorers and were as full of adventure as the men with whom they traveled. They read about Alonzo Pietro, the black captain who piloted Columbus' ship "Nina" back to Spain; Estevanico, to whom goes the credit of discovering both Arizona and New Mexico; and Matthew Henson, who was the only American companion chosen by Admiral Peary to accompany him in his discovery of the North Pole.

Seventh grade pupils read about Negro soldiers during the Revolutionary War; insurrections as protests against the institution of slavery; the thrilling stories of the abolitionists; and picturesque characters following the Reconstruction period, namely, Booker T. Washington, Mary McLeod Bethune, Dr. Mordecai Johnson, Blanche K. Bruce, Dr. William E. B. DuBois, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, Harry T. Burleigh, Henry O. Tanner, James Weldon Johnson, James Bland, and many others.

Eighth grade pupils read about Negro military leaders beginning with the War of 1812. Short narratives are written about Henry Ossian Flipper, John Alexander, Charles Young, and Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., graduates from West Point Military Academy. Among the features on Negro seamen is the thrilling adventure of Pilot Robert Smalls, which reads in part, "All the officers and crew went ashore leaving on board a crew of eight colored men and Smalls. This was Smalls' chance for freedom and he had to act quickly. The transport 'Planter' steamed out of the harbor and as he passed the Confederate forts, Smalls gave the proper signals. As soon as the ship was safely out of the harbor, he raised the Stars and Stripes and headed for the Union fleet. When he reached the fleet he surrendered the ship. The Union Army officials appointed Smalls as pilot of the 'Keokuk' in the attack on Fort Sumter." Camp Robert Smalls at the Great Lakes Naval Training School is named for him.

As the units of material were completed we visited schools and read the stories to the children in order to observe reactions, interests, and vocabulary difficulties. Both white and colored children were eager to hear the stories and were surprised to learn that Negroes had made so many contributions to the development of American life. Some teachers report that when they read the stories about Negroes, their class-rooms are as quiet as death and that the children simply love the units; one teacher says that after she read the story of Jan Matzeliger, inventor of the shoe-lasting machine, many of the children visited shoe repair shops to see if they could locate a machine bearing his name.

An eighth grade teacher reports that the study of Negro history in her class led to pupil research activities. Simple research methods were introduced. So many books and periodicals from the library came in and such lengthy discussions followed that it became necessary to organize a Negro history club. This teacher says, "The children knew so little about Negroes that they were inspired to do research of their own. They wanted to talk about Negroes all day every day. I couldn't do that, so I had to organize a Negro history club. I asked the children to save their findings and questions either for the regular daily history period or the weekly Negro history club."

The same teacher reports that in the study of "Tolerance," a topic in one of our Democracy pamphlets, which are sent monthly to our schools, one child remarked, "Maybe white children will become more tolerant when they study the achievements of the Negro."

A few of the many remarks made by colored and white pupils since the introduction of the study of Negro achievement in the Chicago schools are:

"I didn't know that Negroes had done such outstanding things in American wars"; "I am proud to know that I'm a Negro"; "We feel uplifted when we learn that our race is doing something"; "We don't need to feel ashamed of the Negro race."

In other words, it seems that this project has developed an appreciation for Negro achievements. An eighth grade teacher reported that one pupil asked, "Why haven't we heard about Negro achievements before?"

Many articles are appearing in school newspapers about Negro contributions and the children enjoy finding material about Negroes. Plays, round-table discussions, and stories about Negroes are taking a greater place in school programs. Letters have been received from South America, New York, and the United States Office of Education in Washington, D.C., requesting these units of study.

These units of material are obligatory and have been sent to every public school in the city of Chicago. Nowhere in the United States has such a project been authorized for city-wide study. Such a study will not only serve as a source of inspiration to Negro youth, but as information to youth in general.

It is my firm belief that this educational method, as adopted by Chicago's School Superintendent, Dr. William H. Johnson, will bring about a change in the kind and quality of attitude in our American family and gradually bring about a change in inter-racial as well as racial behavior. Beginning in early childhood and continuing through effective educational methods year after year, wholesome attitudes can be developed. As a result, many of the youths of today who will be in key positions fifteen or twenty years from now will have a different attitude toward Negro Americans.

Intolerance toward Negroes is caused by incomplete views. The underlying facts involved are seldom presented, and students are not aroused to a real point of interest. Their opinions and attitudes are fundamentally determined by their parents or the social group in which they live, and the truth about the road over which the Negro has traveled is unknown to them.

The school curriculum is an educational guide, and unless its material includes the contributions of all its citizens it is not

adequate to the preservation of democracy. The value of such an inclusive curriculum at present may seem abstract, but its intrinsic value will be realized by future generations. Success or failure in racial adjustments depends upon the adoption of educational methods that will effect the desired changes. The change is essentially a change in the quality of attitude, which is an educative process. Negro and white groups avoid each other because of social criticism. Economic and social pressure actually tends to widen the gap of misunderstanding. Unless some educational method is used to weld the contributions of the Negro into the history of American development, there is no likelihood of change. Such a change can be made effective by producing in schools a type of racial understanding, either by experience or vicariously, that will gradually modify the larger and more recalcitrant features of adult society.

We cannot fail to recognize the educational method authorized by Dr. William H. Johnson in the Chicago Public Schools as anything other than an intellectual emancipation which will teach youth that the history of our country is the history of all its people. Negroes have had a share in the growth of our democracy and have contributed to every phase of its history. They have played a part in its adventure, science, education, art, music, war, and labor that made America what it is today. The units of material used in the Chicago Public Schools show that the Negro has made and is still making a contribution to American life.

Some Recent Negro Men of Science*

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Introduction

The achievements of the Negro in the field of Natural Sciences have been given little formal study, and consequently literature on the subject is both scarce and fragmentary. The earliest inquiry into this area of study, as revealed by available literature, was made by Henri Gregoire, a French abolitionist, who published in 1810 a book containing biographical sketches of prominent Negroes, a few of whom were scientists.

Near the close of the century an American Negro minister, William Simmons, for whom Simmons University (now Louisville Municipal College) was named, published a similar volume. From the latter period until the last few years, little apparent interest has been shown in the contributions being made by contemporary scientists of the Negro race. In 1933, however, a Negro physician, Charles H. D. Bowers, published in *Mission Fields* an article, "Negroes in Science," that attracted some attention. George Edmund Haynes, in 1939, published a paper, "Contributions of the Negro Technicians to American Progress," in *The Journal of Negro Education*. These papers were followed by a study in 1939 by Professor W. E. B. Du Bois published in *The American Scholar* entitled "Contributions of Negro Scientists." This article would have been of much greater value to the inquiring student had the writer not withheld important names and discussed them incognito. In the same year Lewis K. Downing published in the *Crisis*, an article, "Contributions of the Negro Scientists."

Editorial Note: This is the first of the three articles on this subject.

Perhaps the Wilberforce University dramatization of Negro Men of Science, a radio program originating with station WLW, February 12, 1941, and given a coast-to-coast broadcast, accomplished more in popularizing the achievements of Negro inventors and scientists than all of the previously mentioned publications combined. Likewise, Rackham Holt's recent biography of the late George Washington Carver has added much to the reputation of that great man.

Purpose of Study

The present paper centers attention upon the contributions of four Negro scientists: Just, Imes, Coleman, and Carver. The purpose of the writer is not to record an enthusiastic biographical treatment of these men, but to present such information on their individual achievements as may be of value to the students interested in further study. The standards by which they are evaluated are imposed by achievement, and the writer's aim is to present an objective picture of their stature as scientists in their respective fields.

Early Beginnings

The African peoples at a very early period in history had mastered many of the basic arts and crafts upon which later developments in the age of science are based. Records show that the early Africans possessed scientific ingenuity, unusual during their days.[1] As early as the civilization of Songhay (700-1335) with Timbuctoo as its Capital we find learned African scientists teaching in the University of Sankore, the mecca of knowledge and learning of that day.[2] Several centuries later many of the Negro slaves in America, descendants of these Africans, demonstrated innate ability in science, much of which proved beneficial to

[1]Felix Du Bois, *Timbuctoo—The Mysterious,* London: William Hienemann, 1897.

[2]W. E. B. Du Bois, *Blackfolk, Then and Now,* New York: Henry Holt, 1939, pp. 48-49.

their masters.[3] Benjamin T. Montgomery, a slave on the farm of Jefferson Davis, repaired the mechanical implements used on the farm and in the household of his master and invented a ship-propeller, which was later subsidized by the Confederate Navy. Jefferson Davis tried to become patentee and asignee of the invention, but the Supreme Court ruled that he could not become patentee nor asignee of the invention of a slave.[4] After the secession of the Southern States and the establishment of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis recommended to the Confederate Congress the following proviso, which became law May 17, 1861:

> And be it further enacted that in case the original inventor or discoverer of the art, machine or improvement for which a patent is solicited is a slave, the master of such may take oath that the said slave was the original; and on complying with the requisites of the law shall have all the rights to which a patentee in entitled by law.[5]

Some slave owners refused to free many of their slaves after the Emancipation Proclamation, hoping thereby to continue the exploitation of their valued mechanical ability.

Suppression of Negro Education

It will also be remembered that Jefferson Davis and many other individuals advocated laws prohibiting the education of Negroes.[6] Consequently, the Negro found himself excluded from education both through lack of opportunity and by law. Furthermore, what he created by mere native ability was taken away from him by the law-makers. Thus, the Negro was enslaved economically, physically, and mentally.

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[3]Charles H. Wesley, *Negro Labor in the United States*: 1850-1925, New York: Vanguard Press, 1927, pp. 5-24.

[4]"Official Opinions of the Attorney General of the U.S.," Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1852, Vol. IX, pp. 171-172.

[5]"Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865," Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904-1905, Vol. I, p. 241.

[6]Horace Mann Bond, *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order*, New York: Prentice Hall, 1934, pp. 21-22.

The eighteenth century German Scholar, Karl Vogt,[7] and many modern thinkers doubted the Negro's ability in the natural sciences. Past as well as present achievements of the Negro scientists are convincing and repudiate these doubts about his scientific ability. Toward the turn of the century there appeared on the horizon Negroes who were well-trained in science. These men labored and sacrificed to make numerous worthy contributions to the progress of science and produced Negro leadership in this field.

Ernest Everett Just

Prominent among the leaders in the biological sciences was Ernest Everett Just, born on August 14, 1883, in the picturesque city of Charleston, South Carolina. He died in Washington, D.C., on October 27, 1941. These fifty-eight years saw the rising and the making of a great man and scholar, a keen thinker, and a diligent investigator.

Ernest E. Just received his early training in the Industrial School of Orangeburg, South Carolina, known today as State Colored Normal, Industrial, Agricultural, and Mechanical College of South Carolina. According to Mrs. Mary White Ovington:

> In 1900, when he was seventeen years of age, he left the South with five dollars in his pocket and an extra pair of shoes. On the Clyde Line he worked his way to New York, where he left a shabbier pair of shoes and with the five dollars still intact, hunted for work. In four weeks he had made enough money to take a train further north to a school which he had read about in the Christian Endeavor World, Kimball Academy.[8]

It is to be borne in mind that Kimball Academy at Meriden, New Hampshire, is one of the exclusive preparatory schools of America. It is, indeed, a singular honor to attend this school. As

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[7]Karl Vogt, *Lectures on Man—his place in creation and the history of the earth*, London: J. Hunt, Anthropological Society Publication, 1864, pp. 192-193.

[8]Mary W. Ovington, *Portraits in Color*, New York: The Viking Press, 1927, pp. 160-166.

far as the records show, Ernest E. Just was one of the few Negroes to attend and graduate from this preparatory school. During his student days at this institution he became quite distinguished and popular with his fellow students. His brilliant scholarship and outstanding qualities of moral character won for him a place on the debating team, the presidency of his class, and the editorship of the school paper.

Upon graduation from Kimball Academy, Just was persuaded by all who knew him to further his education. He entered Dartmouth College. While there he proved to be a brilliant student of Greek, Latin, and English, but toward the end of his college years he developed a love for the biological sciences. He studied under some of the eminent scholars of biology, among whom was the brilliant embryologist, Dr. William Patten, who still teaches at Dartmouth.

After completing a brilliant college career at Dartmouth, Just graduated in 1907 with the degree of bachelor of arts, having won the Phi Beta Kappa key during his senior year to become the only *magna cum laude* of his class. Two years later, he was appointed an instructor in zoology at Howard University and held this position from 1909 to 1910. Meanwhile, he had become a zealous student of zoology.

His keen desire for knowledge led him to enter the graduate school of University of Chicago and to select zoology as his field of concentration. While studying there, Just made many friends, among whom was Dr. Frank R. Lillie, under whom he studied. Dr. Lillie discovered very early that Just was an unusual student who showed great promise in the biological sciences. Recently Dr. Lillie had this to say in his memorial to Ernest E. Just:

> It is a sad task to write this short memorial on my former student, collaborator, and a friend, Professor E. E. Just of Howard University in Washington. His death was premature and his work unfinished, but his accomplishments were many worthy of remembrance. Professor

> Just was of the Negro race and undoubtedly the best investigator in the field of biology that his people have produced in America.[9]

It was while at Chicago, in 1913, that Ernest E. Just released his first technical paper for publication. This work was in the field of embryology and attracted world-wide attention. According to Dr. Lillie:

> In the twenty summer sessions that Ernest E. Just spent at the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, he became more widely acquainted with the embryological resources of the Marine Fauna than probably any other person; and he learned to handle the material with skill and understanding. In consequence, he was in great demand, especially by physiologists who knew their physics and chemistry better than biology and for advice and assistance which he rendered generously. When he withdrew from Woods Hole to work in European Laboratories, his loss to the scientific community at Woods Hole was deeply felt.[10]

Just met with some measure of success in all his scientific investigations, but this did not stop his zest to investigate more of the biological problems of his day.

In 1914, while working in the Marine Biological Laboratories at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, he published a paper in Marine Biology, entitled "The Breeding Habits of Heteroneris Forms of Platyneris Megalops."[11] Following this were fifty or more original studies published in several standard scientific journals.

Upon completing his work at the University of Chicago, Just received the doctor of philosophy degree in experimental zoology in 1916. He then returned to Howard University where he taught physiology for a while in the medical school; later he became professor and director of the department of zoology there, a position he held at the time of his premature death.

Just was given a fellowship by the Rosenwald Foundation to do special research in biological science from 1920 to 1930, a period

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[9]Frank R. Lillie, "Ernest Everett Just," *Science*, 95:2453, October 11, 1942.

[10]*Ibid.*, p. 10.

[11]Biological Bulletin, 27:201-212, October, 1914.

of ten years. It is interesting here to note that Ernest E. Just in a few years gained world wide fame for his works. He worked in some of the leading laboratories of this country and of Europe. To mention a few: The famous Marine Biological Laboratories of Woods Hole, Massachusetts, the Kaiser Wilhelm Zoological Laboratories of Germany, and the Biological Laboratories of Naples, Italy. In addition to this he appeared as special lecturer at some of the world's leading Universities.

Before the beginning of the present World War, Just was engaged in research at the University of Paris. The present conflict, however, ended his work there, and he returned to the United States in 1940. Listed among his most important contributions to the fields of knowledge is a chapter prepared in collaboration with his teacher and friend, Dr. Frank R. Lillie, for a "General Cytology Textbook."[12] Just also collaborated with Jerome Alexander in a treatise on "Colloid Chemistry" which attracted great attention among scientists, especially bio-chemists.

In more recent years prominent men of science prevailed upon Just to publish some of his studies in book form. Five years ago, while in Paris, he completed his first book, "Biology of Cell Surface."[13] This work has in this very short period gained recognition as a classic by leading teachers of the subject. In response to numerous requests, he later released for publication a manual setting forth his special technique and methods for experiments on eggs of marine animals.[14]

Ernest E. Just was one of the founders and associate editors of the "Biological Bulletin," one of the official organs of the American Society of Biologists. He remained in this position until his death. He was also a member of the editorial board of the

[12]Edmund V. Cowdry, *General Cytology,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925, pp. 451-556.

[13]Ernest E. Just, *Biology of Cell Surface,* Philadelphia: Blakiston Co., 1938.

[14]Ernest E. Just, *Manual of Basic Methods for Experiments on Egg of Marine Animals,* Philadelphia, Blakiston Co., 1938.

"Journal of Physiological Zoology." He received many honors in his life, too numerous to list completely in this article. Prominent among these was the winning of the "Harmon Award," an honor conferred upon persons of African descent for outstanding achievement. On February 12, 1915, at Ethical Culture Hall, New York City, the Spingarn Medal was awarded to him by former president William Howard Taft. In addition to these honors, Just was made a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, serving at one time as President of the American Zoological Society. He was also corresponding member of La Societe des Sciences Naturelles et Mathematiques of France.

These are only a few of the brilliant achievements in the career of Ernest E. Just. We could not begin to review adequately his life in so short a space, nor can his achievements be evaluated adequately in this generation, or in several more to come.

The Negro race has, in the life of Ernest E. Just, a source of pride, someone to whom it can point as a contributor to man's knowledge and understanding of life.

Teachers of Democracy

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AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY I was surprised at some of the questions which the graduate students asked concerning the race problem. One morning a teacher in a New York State Teachers College stopped me in the hall and told me that his eyes had been opened by reading Dr. Beale's *Are American Teachers Free?*[1] He admitted that his contacts with minorities had been very limited. "We have only a few colored students at my school because we can't place them as teachers in New York State," he volunteered. How final it all was, and yet I have always felt that a qualified citizen should be given an equal opportunity to be educated in a publicly supported institution. How easy it is to close the door in the face of minority groups by sweetly saying, "We don't have calls for your group; therefore, we advise you not to become a teacher." Who is to say what life will bring and what contribution a person will make?

That conversation made me think of some experiences that I have had with teachers. While attending the convention of the National Council of Teachers of English at Hotel Stevens in Chicago a few years ago, two friends, both high-school teachers in Chicago, and I went to the closing luncheon meeting very early so that we would get a good table and avoid any embarrassment. How amused we were to hear the teachers gaily calling to each other that they had four seats near the platform only to see them upon approaching closer to us hurry on not to greener, but surely to uncontaminated pastures! We spoke softly to each other and recalled that especially these teachers had in their hands the teaching of social understanding. However, the seats at our table were filled by teachers who no doubt would sanction the following passage from "Democratic Concepts of Learning and Teaching" by A. T. McSwain:[2]

> As a philosophy of life and group endeavor, democracy recognizes, respects, and safeguards the uniqueness and emerging individuality of each individual—child

[1]Howard K. Beale, *Are American Teachers Free?* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936, pp. 855. (Report of the Commission on the Social Studies, Part XII.)

[2]John Dewey Society, *Fourth Yearbook*: *Teachers for Democracy*, Written in Collaboration by George E. Axtelle and William Wattenberg, New York: Appleton-Century Company, 1940, p. 113.

> or adult. It expresses faith in the educability of man, irrespective of age, race, or creed. The democratic ideal affirms the individual's right to equal—but not identical—opportunities for the development of his potentialities. The integrity and welfare of each member of society and the intelligent reconstruction of the societal pattern are the ends sought.

Perhaps my example is of such a social nature that some of my readers cannot criticize these teachers for their behavior. Let me tell you an incident which comes from my experience as a substitute in New York City. I was assisting a kindergarten teacher in Harlem who was beside herself with disciplinary problems. She confided to me that the parents kept their children clean, but that these colored children were inferior to white children. "My little boy," she stated, "loves to listen to poetry and music, but these children are never quiet enough for me to read to them or play the piano for them." She asked to be transferred to her home in Forest Hills. I hope that she got her request. Personally, I found her a high type of teacher. I am sure that she had received a good rating in school, but she knew nothing about these underprivileged youngsters. She most likely had never heard of crowded and broken homes, working parents, house-rent parties, etc.

My third and last incident is taken from an English classroom in a Jersey City high school. The teacher, a graduate student at one of the great Northern universities, came across the expression "to work like a nigger" in her literature lesson. She laughingly remarked, "I didn't know Negroes ever worked hard." Why had she not known of the toil of a minority group which is one-tenth of our entire population? How is it that some of our teachers have such little understanding, such little tolerance? These questions made me want to look into the social and economic background of our American teachers. The teachers colleges should be vitally interested in the kind of material that they will train, especially if they wish to approach the ideals set up by the most progressive educators.

The term "social background" has been amply defined by Dr. M'Ledge Moffett in *The Social Background and Activities of Teachers College Students*.[3]

> "Social Background" refers to the experiences, contacts, and activities which have been controlled by environmental factors; the social, economic, and occupational status of the family of which he is a part; the potentialities of the community in which he has been reared; the educational opportunities he has had; travel; contacts with other social groups; personal conversation with different peoples or observation of different races; and the part played by books, music, and art in his life experiences.

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[3]M'Ledge Moffett, *Social Background and Activities of Teachers College Students*, New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1929, pp. 1-2. (Contributions to Education, Number 375.)

From this definition we can see not only the careful analysis that must be made of prospective teachers but also the broad training that must be incorporated in the curricula of teachers colleges to make up for the deficiencies discovered in the analyses of their social backgrounds.

From studies made of the background of American teachers many interesting facts are revealed. The evidence shows that the American teachers are coming from a higher class than previously. The study, *The Social and Economic Background of State Teachers College Students*,[4] published in 1925, brought out the interesting fact that the number of students coming from the farm and labor class has decreased. Dr. Moffett's study[5] of 1,080 inventories of students in fifteen teachers colleges shows that the median student is nineteen years of age and was born of native-born parents in the state. The parents are intellectually above the average of the country, but below that of the superior. As borne out in other studies, the father is owner or manager of a small business or farm. The student's economic standard is the third of six levels. The student has attended the rural elementary school and has graduated from the standard four-year high school. Travel and contact with art, music, or literature have been limited by living in a small community. New York State teachers should present a very bright picture of social background. In a 1937 study[6] the findings were that the teachers, measured by the occupational yardstick, ranked high in social background. Sixty-seven per cent came from families whose parents were either in the proprietary or the professional class. Eleven per cent came from the clerks and kindred workers group, and five per cent, from the skilled trades.

Let no one infer that I am praising one class more than another. Too well do I know that the individual is our final yardstick. However, these studies have uncovered a weak spot in our teacher training. From the National Survey of the Education of Teachers by the Office of Education[7]

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[4]Colorado State Teachers College, Greeley, *Social and Economic Background of State Teachers College Students*, Greeley: The College, 1925, p. 53. (Bulletin Series 25, Number 6, Research Bulletin, Number 11.)

[5]Moffett, *Op. Cit.*, p. 38.

[6]Wayne W. Soper and Others, *Social, Cultural, and Economic Status of Public School Tachers in New York State* (for the Fact Finding Committee of the New York State Teachers Association), Albany: New York State Teachers Association, 1937, p. 37. (Educational Monograph, Number 6.)

[7]U. S. Office of Education, *National Survey of the Education of Teachers: Teacher Personnel in the United States*, Edward S. Evenden and Others, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1935, p. 141. (Bulletin 1933, Number 10.)

dealing with the teacher personnel in the United States comes the statement:

> The problem has its roots centered deeply in the backgrounds and the personal life of the student. The data with which the study deals reveal unmistakable differences in the educational, social, and economic backgrounds of prospective teachers. They reveal a marked provincialism in the personal life-experiences of the matriculant.

The same note is sounded in the New York Survey in the sentence: "There is some indication from studies made that the background of many teachers is inadequate to meet the social responsibilities of their position."[8]

Thus the teachers colleges are challenged to perform a greater service for prospective teachers. No longer can we be satisfied knowing that the average teacher comes from the middle class of American society. We as teachers in the training schools must study the students' communities, homes, beliefs, activities, and contacts. We must set up learning experiences which will make every individual a well-rounded person capable of being a teacher in a democracy. And, in order to accomplish this, we must prepare ourselves so that we, whether of the majority or minority group, will have faith in democracy burning forever in our hearts.

[8]Moffett, *Op. Cit.*, p. 37.

College Notes and News

JOSEPH H. REASON, *Reference Librarian*
Howard University; Washington, D.C.

GILES A. HUBERT has resigned as assistant to the director of the rural rehabilitation division of the Farm Security Administration and is returning to his post as professor of economics at **Fisk University.** At Fisk, Mr. Hubert will develop a program of advanced training in rural problems and organization through the co-operation of the University and the FSA, together with the aid of a fellowship fund provided by the General Education Board.

* * *

RALPH P. BRIDGMAN, dean of students at Brooklyn College, has been chosen as the next president of **Hampton Institute.** Dr. Bridgman, who will assume his new duties on February 1, succeeds Malcolm S. MacLean, resigned.

* * *

AMONG THE NEW teachers at **Howard University** are Walter Booker and Walter T. Daniels. Dr. Booker, formerly of Prairie View, is teaching pharmacology in the College of Medicine; and, Dr. Daniels, formerly of Southern University, is teaching civil engineering in the School of Engineering and Architecture.

* * *

ROBERT L. REYNOLDS, formerly teacher of vocational agriculture in the state colleges of Delaware, Arkansas, and Florida, is now chairman of the division of applied arts and sciences of **Oakwood College** at Huntsville, Alabama.

* * *

M. F. WHITTAKER, president of **South Carolina State A. & M. College,** has announced the organization of a research committee which will study the needs of South Carolina Negroes and implement a program at the College to satisfy those needs. The College has acquired a tract of three hundred acres to be used for experimental farming in anticipation of these needs.

* * *

HARRY V. RICHARDSON, chaplain of **Tuskegee Institute**, will spend next year studying the life and work of the rural church. Part of the time will be spent doing field work and the remainder will be spent at Drew University where Mr. Richardson will study methods of improving rural life.

* * *

DR. W. S. DAVIS has been elected president of **Tennessee State A. & I. College** by the Tennessee state board of education. Dr. Davis, formerly teacher of agricultural education, has been acting president since the withdrawal of Dr. W. J. Hale.

* * *

CHARLES W. BUGGS, professor of biology at Dillard University, has joined the faculty of **Wayne University**, Detroit. The first Negro to be appointed to this faculty, Dr. Buggs will teach bacteriology in the School of Medicine at Wayne.

* * *

The year 1944 marks the hundredth year of the "Wilberforce Idea" conceived in 1844 by the Ohio Conference of the A. M. E. Church which adopted a resolution for the establishment of a "seminary of learning." **Wilberforce University** will celebrate this centenial in 1944 and launch the "Wilberforce Centenary Campaign" for the purpose of raising funds to meet the long-standing debt that has been crippling Wilberforce for the last twenty years.

* * *

Current Articles on Negro Education

Lucile Baker, *Department of Education*
Spelman College; Atlanta, Georgia

Articles which have appeared recently might be characterized as pointing toward enriched curriculum planning as a means for attaining democratic ideals more satisfactorily than has thus far been realized. In "Some Ideological Confusion among Negro College Students"[1] lack of social understanding as revealed in a survey provides the basis for the suggested revaluation and selection of broad objectives in social science instruction.

Replete with implications for those concerned with social studies instruction is the report[2] of the adoption by the Chicago public schools of the findings of a research committee appointed to study the contributions of Negroes to the American way of life. One might question the author's statement that there is no discrimination in the Chicago public school system and suggest that, as a safeguard against segregated social studies instruction, so to speak, separate units concerning Negroes be integrated into the social studies program as a whole.

Further implications for directors of teacher education lie in the annotated bibliographies of books about Negroes. "Children's Books on the Negro to Help Build a Better World"[3] points out how democratic attitudes toward Negroes can be developed

[1]Mozell C. Hill and Thelma D. Ackiss. "Some Ideological Confusion among Negro College Students." *The Journal of Negro Education,* 12:600-606, Fall, 1943.

[3]Charlemae Rollins. "Children's Books on the Negro to Help Build a Better World." *The Elementary English Review,* 20:219-223, October, 1943.

[2]William H. Johnson. "The Place of the Negro in the Social Studies, Chicago Public Schools." *School and Society,* 58:283-285, October 9, 1943.

through directed reading. The criteria are not so clear cut, however, for judging the content of a book, and only three of the recommended books show wholesome relations between the races. On the other hand, the criteria by which the books are evaluated in "Reading for Democracy"[4] are stated clearly, and the list is extensive. Children's reactions to the books have been regarded in compiling the former list, but not in the latter, which also includes "Little Black Sambo," once found objectionable as supplementary reading in the opinions of the parents in a California community.

The culmination of enriched curricula as a means for realizing democratic ideals is reached in the appraisal of the Georgia program for Curriculum Planning for Human Welfare.[5] An open letter to rural teachers and an accompanying bibliography point toward the infinite possibilities for service in rural education from which field the Georgia life-related curriculum was developed.

[4]Augusta Baker. "Reading for Democracy." *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 18:140-144, October, 1943.

[5]Alethea Washington and Anne O'H. Williamson. "Rural Education: War-time 1943-1944." *The Journal of Negro Education*, 12:693-698, Fall, 1943.

Book Reviews

New World A-Coming. By Roi Ottley. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943. Pp. viii, 364. $3.00.

"This war, undeniably, belongs to the Negro as well as to the white man. To this extent, it may be called a 'People's War'—for in spite of selfish interests a new world is a-coming with the sweep and fury of the Resurrection." Thus, Roi Ottley, a newspaper man of no mean ability, ends naively his fascinating and scholarly book. Every war brings about some social and economic changes, and, consequently, the Negro's position in the American social order may improve a little as a result of the present war, but there will undoubtedly be a terrific gap between what benefits the Negro will actually receive and what he is led to expect by the so-called war aims of our allies. This reviewer seriously doubts, judging from recent trends, if "a new world is a-coming with the sweep and fury of the Resurrection" so far as the colored races are concerned!

New World A-Coming is undoubtedly a thought-provoking book, full of facts cleverly assembled in appealing and easy-to-read style, with such catchy titles for chapters as "Passage to Utopia," "I Talked with God," "The Slum-shocked," and "Glamour Boy." The book gives a cross section of Negro life in America thru its interpretation of Harlem, "the capital of clowns, cults, and cabarets, and the cultural and intellectual life of the Negro world."

The author's approach to the phenomenal success of the "Ubiquitous Father Divine, originator of religion on the chain-store plan," is sympathetic, but one cannot say the same thing about his interpretation of Clayton Powell as the "Glammor Boy" who frequently changes his political alignments and whose ultimate goal seems to be the amassing of power. The chapter on "The Black Cabineteers," children of the New Deal, is both informative and revealing.

New World A-Coming is a book which every one interested in understanding the Negro and his problems should read. The author has done an excellent job and has managed to interpret Negro life objectively.

—V. V. Oak

Wilberforce University

To Stem This Tide—A Survey of racial tension areas in the United States. By Charles S. Johnson and Associates. Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1943, pp. x, 142. Fifty cents.

THIS TIMELY SCIENTIFIC STUDY of the racial tension areas in the United States contains valuable information, with facts and figures, and, quite often, with names of companies and persons, guilty of creating racial tensions. As one reads case after case of gross racial prejudice, uncalled-for provocation, and downright physical violence by the whites against Negroes often ending in the latter's death, one feels certain that even if "a new world is a-coming," it will not be for Negroes, nor, for that matter, for any colored races of the world.

The chapters on "Treatment of Negro Soldiers" and "Lawlessness of the 'Law' " take away what little hope one may have in justice, for it seems that no law can protect Negroes when there is a small group of whites fanatically determined to keep the Negroes down. Unfortunately, most of the so-called Christian churches too do not have the gumption to stand for truth and fairplay and raise their voices against white hoodlums. There seems to be a conspiracy of silence among the white preachers of the gospel, a disgusting deviation from what they preach and what they follow, a virtual moral crucification of Christ whom they pretend to worship. The riots in Detroit, a northern city supposedly free from deep-seated prejudice of the South against Negroes, are a disgrace to any nation fighting the righteous cause of democracy.

Dr. Johnson and his associates need to be congratulated for their analytical study of the situation and for their valuable suggestions in their last chapter on "Post-War Problems in Prospect" for avoiding further race riots that are bound to come after our soldiers return from the army. The men who have faced death and have, therefore, become immune to its fear are not going to take insults quietly.

V. V. OAK

The Negro's Share—A study of income, consumption, housing, and public assistance. By RICHARD STERNER in collaboration with LENORE A. EPSTEIN, ELLEN WINSTON, and others. New York: Harpers and Brothers, 1943. Pp. xii, 433. $4.50.

THIS IS THE THIRD VOLUME in "The Negro in American Life Series" sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation. The author is a reputed Swedish scholar who came to this country for the express purpose of making this study and has done a very good job of it. As the subtitle of this book indi-

cates, one finds in this book a study of family income and expenditure, housing conditions, and public assistance given to and received by Negroes.

This economic treatise is well-documented with several statistical tables. Obviously not written for the layman, the book fills a long-felt need for a scholarly analysis and interpretation of the census data and for a more reliable knowledge of the exact economic status of the Negro in this rich land of ours.

—V. V. O.

Art in the Elementary Grades (A Manual for Teachers). By Frances E. Thompson. Nashville: State Department of Education, Division of Negro Education, 1943. 118 pp. $1.50.

John Keats wrote "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." If we as a nation are to appreciate fully the beauties of life and thus have perennial joy, there is need for a greater emphasis on art in the elementary grades.

Too many teachers in elementary schools are lacking in an appreciation of art and the ways by which art may be made more meaningful in the lives of the boys and girls whom they teach. The present emergency is placing great emphasis upon making use of materials at hand. Folk art is now valuable as a morale builder and as a stimulus to thrift. Beauty is not a luxury but a necessity. It need not be expensive in money or in "points." To achieve beauty is to reap dividends from work well done with appreciation for symmetry and the eternal fitness of things.

Miss Thompson is well fitted to serve as an interpreter of art to teachers of children. She has served with distinction as a teacher of art education in a state teachers college. Her professional education has been enriched by sustained periods of study at the Massachusetts School of Art, Boston University, and Harvard University. Just before Hitler's hordes moved in, she spent a year as a Julius Rosenwald Fellow studying folk art at Charles University in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

In her introduction, the author stresses the practical phases of the manual when she says "It is hoped that the material here will serve all teachers who can use it and especially those teachers who have the good fortune to work near the great out-of-doors where so much good material for art teaching is easily found." Sections devoted to Motivating the Job, School Art Projected into Community Life, the Art Program, all serve to place the teaching of art in its proper perspective as a folk activity well within the scope and power of elementary school children even in rural schools.

The material is well presented with simple and understandable directions. Appropriate illustrations are given on practically every page. In the opinion of the reviewer these illustrations are one of the major contributions of the manual. In the words of the author "The methods developed are not the only ones capable of providing results, there are others, however, these have proved successful in classroom teaching over a considerable period of time."

Finally, the manual itself is a good illustration of the gospel which it preaches. In format and in presentation it is a work of art.

GEORGE W. GORE, JR.

Tennessee A. and I. State College

Modern Negro Art. By JAMES A. PORTER. New York: Dryden Press, 1943. 272 pp. $3.25.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE NEGRO in music has long been recognized and generally acclaimed but there has been a lack of authentic and accessible information concerning what the Negro has done in the visual arts. Beginning with the Negro craftsmen and artists of pre-civil war days the author traces the achievements of successive artists to the present time. In addition to painting there is a discussion of sculpture, wood-engraving, and lithography.

According to the writer "Four generations were required to produce the first genius among Negro artists. But the interval prepared the way for Henry O. Tanner." The twentieth century is regarded as the beginning of the Negro's greater interest in his cultural opportunities. This interest was intensified by the New Negro Movement in the years following the First World War. In discussing contemporary artists, especial tribute is paid to the mural style of Aaron Douglas, the genius of Hale Woodruff, the creative work of James L. Wells, the paintings of William H. Johnson, the aesthetic inspiration of George C. Neal, and the illustrations of Elmer Simms Campbell and others of the past decade.

In the concluding chapter on "Progress in the Graphic Arts," the author makes this significant observation: "The Negro artist uses the etching needle, the graver's burin, the lithographic stone as an electoral candidate would the public address system to reach the masses of people directly and effectively. . . . It is the writer's belief that through the less exclusive channels of drawing and the graphic arts, in short, through the inexpensive media of pictorial art, the Negro artist has begun the conquest of a hitherto reluctant public."

A collection of 85 beautiful halftones of work by over 40 artists adds to the value of the book.

GEORGE W. GORE, JR.
Tennessee A. and I. State College

The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620-1776. By LORENZO J. GREENE. New York: Columbia University Press, 1942. 404 pp.

THE COMBINATION OF sound scholarship and interesting writing is, unfortunately, a rare one. Number 494 of Coulmbia University's impressive Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, entitled *The Negro in Colonial New England,* reveals a fine example of this rare avis, the humanized scholar with a gift of writing, in the person of Dr. Lorenzo J. Greene, professor of history at Lincoln University in Missouri.

This study presents the story of the origin and growth of the slave trade in New England, and an analysis of the social repercussions of this trade. Dr. Greene examines the status of slaves resident in New England, their occupations, and their treatment by society and by the courts of law. The Negro minority is pertinently analyzed and described, and is placed securely in the context of the times.

From a sociological point of view, there is an appreciable awareness of the social inconsistencies concomitant with the artificial slave society and of the dynamic nature of their impact upon the native institutions of New England. At all times, it must be said, Dr. Greene maintains an impartial and unprejudiced attitude toward his subject. He lets it tell its own story, enhancing it rather with the zest of his prose style than with the tenor of his opinions. When he relates the punishment, which was the lot of a miscreant Negro, he always gives illustrations to indicate how a white was treated in a comparable situation. Happily, there is no consciousness here of the Negro's problem; there is only a sensitive consciousness of the *social* problem. Dr. Greene avoids the pitfall which so often entraps the enthusiastic student of social problems, especially those problems concerning racial minorities. He realizes, as we all must realize before we solve any of our present social dilemmas, that it is rights, not *our* particular rights, for which we must fight. The problem of the Negro in colonial New England was not the Negro's problem; it was New England's problem.

Of the study as a whole, it might be said then, that though it was primarily one of the Negro in New England, the problem is so well set in its background that the book becomes a valuable study of the life of the times generally.

R. I. BRINGHAM
University of Missouri Instructor in English

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NEGRO COLLEGE QUARTERLY

Volume II

1944

KRAUS REPRINT CO.
New York
1972

Reprinted with the permission of the original publisher
KRAUS REPRINT CO.
A U.S. Division of Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited

Printed in Germany